

MPH Student Survey 2019

MPH students completed an online satisfaction survey in March-April, 2019. The anonymous survey asked students to report on various dimensions of their experience in the MPH program and make recommendations for the future.

Survey Instrument

The survey questions were identical to questions asked since 2014 to assess program improvement over time.

Dissemination of the Online Survey

The survey was administered online during the months of March and April 2019. An initial email was sent in early March providing the survey link. Seven days later, a second email was sent providing a reminder to complete the survey. In late March, following a week-long spring break, a third email was sent in April providing a final reminder to complete the survey. Students took the survey using Qualtrics.

Of the 45 students who received the invitation to take the online survey, 31 responded, for a response rate of 69%. Another six opened the survey but did not take it.

Student Characteristics

Of the 31 students who responded to the survey, 41% (n=13) were in the Community Health Education (CHE) concentration, 41% (n=13) were in the Health Policy and Management (HPM) concentration, and 13% (n=5) were in the Veterinary Public Health (VPH) concentration.

Eight students were enrolled part time, and nine were in dual or concurrent degree programs, such as the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine or an Masters of Sciences in Nutrition.

Satisfaction with Interactions with Faculty

Students were asked about their satisfaction with five aspects of interaction with faculty members. Response options were: 1=not very satisfied, 2=less than satisfied, 3=satisfied, 4=more than satisfied and 5=very satisfied.

	Mean	Min	Max
How satisfied are you with interactions with faculty?			
Quality of faculty advising	4.2	3	5
Faculty encourage active student involvement in learning	4.4	3	5
Communications with faculty	4.4	3	5
Faculty show respect for students	4.4	2	5

Although the sample size was not big enough to make comparisons of single items across concentrations, we could compare the mean score for all items (Chronbach's alpha = 0.90). Mean scores were 4.2 for CHE, 4.3 for HPM and 5.0 for VPH ($p = 0.12$).

Two students replied to the follow-up question: "Please help us understand why you are less than or not very satisfied with your interactions with faculty."

Some faculty members are amazing and supportive. There are others, who I felt, singled you out during classes to make you feel inferior, not necessarily to me but colleagues.

Everyone on staff is just as busy as we are as students, so when they are stressed, it is pretty easy to tell.

Students were not asked open-ended questions regarding what they valued about interactions with faculty members.

Satisfaction with MPH Memos and Listserv

	Mean	Min	Max
How satisfied are you with the provision of helpful information by the department?			
MPH Memos	3.7	1	5
MPH listserv	3.8	2	5

Four students responded to the question, "Please help us understand why you are less than or not very satisfied with the provision of information from the department."

I feel that most information is based on the premise that most students have a solid background in coursework, university traditions, and expectations. As a returning adult student, I often feel at a loss when it comes to knowing what is expected of me. That being said, I am highly satisfied with answers I have been given by departments staff to direct questions posed by me.

I feel as if the memos do not provide any helpful information or the information is provided either too late or in very short notice.

Sometimes the letter would come out way after events had already occurred. Also, when there are events listed in the memos they should send out surveys for students to see which days or times work best for the most amount of people (not just the "most important" students).

Most of it doesn't pertain to Veterinary students- we can't do a lot of day time event or activities. This usually clogs up my mailbox, and I usually end up deleting them.

Satisfaction with Opportunity to Provide Input

	Mean	Min	Max
How satisfied are you with the opportunity to...			
Provide input to the MPH program	3.6	1	5
Participate with the PHGSA	3.4	1	5

Five students who reported being less than satisfied responded to the question, "Please help us understand why you are less than or not very satisfied with the opportunity to be engaged in department activities.

I think coming in as a new student in the spring semester has not been easy as far as feeling as a welcomed part of the department. There is very little direction as far as what opportunities are available for me, what I should know about as far as student groups, and what classes are best for me to be taking. It would be nice to have at least a mini-orientation or welcome lunch of some sort for new part-time spring students. I am planning on participating in the new fall student orientation to hopefully make up for feeling so out of the loop!

I know for the HPM curriculum specifically, none of the students were consulted about the curriculum change before or when it happened. It just happened and a lot of the students felt blind-sided and we had to scramble to make sure we were taking the right classes at the right time, and it made it more difficult for those of us trying to get minors.

Fees associated with GSPHA discourage equitable participation.

Again, most things are held during the day and adding more activities to veterinary schedule is very difficult.

Haven't seen very many gatherings or events compared to in the past.

Satisfaction with Career Planning, Field Placement, Development of Professional Competencies

	Mean	Min	Max
How satisfied are you with guidance on field practice and career planning?			
Field placement	3.4	1	5
Career planning	3.3	1	5

Several students responded to the question, "Please help us understand why you are less than or not very satisfied with the guidance on field practice or career planning."

It may be too early for me to be able to find out exactly what I need to do, or I just need more guidance to know where I should be in the process

There has not been much career planning focus in my classes, which could be helpful.

I feel like we have not received much information on what is to come in the future. It is nice to feel prepared. Also, I know a few of us thought that the field placements were found for us, come to find out we actually find our own and then get approval. It just seemed kind of confusing at first and took a lot of questioning to get a straight answer. The field placement guide is great but also not very known about. I think students tend to forget it is there on the website. Also, more job/career fairs would be cool! Especially for those who are unsure about which type of field placement they want to apply for.

Perhaps my "less than" satisfaction is more related to where I am in my progression toward graduation rather than the departments engagement in guidance. I will say the last time I felt engaged with field practice or career planning was during seminar. This engage was initiated by me in passing after a handful of seminar classes. I have no problem with needing to take initiative in seeking out field practice and career opportunities. However, for those of us who can rarely attend various career oriented events outside of class time it seems that opportunities to engage with faculty on this topic only come about if we actively seek them out. Once again, students must be proactive for their own benefit so I do not place much blame on the department for these feelings

The career planning events are held during times that not a lot of students can attend, especially students who work a full-time job in addition to being a full-time student.

There as been little initiative by the field practice coordinator is proving student information about the field placement, lack of information in options student may consider or what was done in the past, and lack of interest in helping the current students going into their field placement. More effort has been put into sending information about current job spots that are only applicable to those who have already graduated

Since I am a first year, it seems like I am having to wait until a semester before when I would prefer to do it sooner.

Planning for the future is such a stressful process, and I feel left in the dark about how to process goes.

I think this is reasonable for the first year because we are still figuring out what we want to pursue. There is guidance when we seek it about the field placement and careers, but there could be more guidance for the first-year students who are trying to sort through

all the options. There is significant assistance available. I think my responses reflect an inner sense of stress in the first year about all the big decisions to be made about the field placement and career.

I never really had anyone help me with planning anything on the Public Health side help me. If I did anything I had to go and find info about veterinary related subjects or questions elsewhere and on my own.

Coursework

Students reported their satisfaction with two aspects of coursework. In addition, they were asked whether class size was conducive to learning. Response options for the class size question were 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

	Mean	Min	Max
Courses expand professional competencies	3.9	3	5
Courses relevant for professional growth and development	3.9	3	5
Class size conducive to learning	4.5	3	5

Students were asked to rate the appropriateness of the challenge in their core and concentration courses, including the courses they were taking in the current semester.

	Percent of Respondents	
	Core Courses	Concentration Courses
Far less challenge than needed for professional preparation	3%	0%
Somewhat less challenge than needed	3%	0%
An appropriate graduate-level challenge	84%	94%
Somewhat more challenge than needed	10%	6%
Far more challenge than needed for professional preparation	0%	0%

Those students who reported less challenge than appropriate were asked, "Please help us understand why you feel the core courses you have taken or are currently taking offer somewhat less or far less challenge than needed for professional preparation."

One response was given regarding core courses:

Feels like we scratch the surface but never go into understanding the complexities of issues, specifically for 555, 550, 552

I had the opportunity to take similar classes as part of my undergraduate coursework and sometimes wished I could have taken a more advanced level or alternative elective in its place rather than re-learn material.

Since no students reported too-little challenge for concentration courses, this question was not asked of those students.

Overall Satisfaction with the MPH Program

Finally, students were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the MPH program. Among all students, 16% reported being satisfied, 35% were more than satisfied, and 48% were very satisfied, for a mean score of 4.3 out of five.

The mean score of 4.3 out of five is between “more than satisfied” (4) and “very satisfied” (5).